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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 000664

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, AF/SPG

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SU](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT EFFORTS TO
UNITE SUDANESE POLITICAL PARTIES

REF: A. CAIRO 634

[B](#). CAIRO 567

[C](#). CAIRO 550

[D](#). CAIRO 470

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs
William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Key Points:

-- Dr. Osama al-Ghazali Harb, chairman of the Egyptian National Democratic Front Party (NDF), and NDF deputy chairman, Dr. Ibrahim Nawar, told us on April 2 that their party sponsored a forum on March 24-26, in Cairo, to unite Sudanese political parties because of Sudan's "strategic importance" to Egypt, and the need to create an alternative to President Bashir.

-- The Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM), various Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) factions, the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the Umma Party sent representatives to the NDF forum. According to Nawar, who chaired the event, the parties, excluding the NDP, agreed on principles that address humanitarian aid, security in the IDP camps, return of IDPs, comprehensive peace, and a transition to democracy.

-- There has been little reaction to the forum from the Government of Egypt (GOE), or the Egyptian media. Harb and Nawar regret the lack of reaction from the media, but believe that the GOE's silence could be a good sign.

-- Harb believes the USG should insist the Bashir stand trial at The Hague, and should put a higher priority on addressing the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: This is the NDF's first foray into foreign affairs, although Harb is the publisher of The International Politics Journal. Harb is trying to mediate the Sudan issue to gain credibility for his party in Egypt. We have heard various estimates about the importance of the expelled NGOs. The NDP told us that the NGOs account for 6 percent of the humanitarian aid in Darfur, the NDF said 65 percent, and international organizations quoted a more reasonable figure of 40 percent. Egyptian State Security (SSIS) concerns about the forum agitating the local Sudanese population, estimated between 1-4 million, probably plays a role in the lack of "official" media coverage. End Comment.

Mixed Response of Sudanese Leaders in Cairo Mixed

[1](#)3. (C) Most of our Sudanese contacts were talking about the forum three weeks in advance (reftels A-D). There is a belief among many Sudanese opposition leaders in Cairo that Egyptian General Intelligence Director Omar Soliman supports NDF efforts to address Sudan. However, there has been no

official acknowledgment of GOE support for the NDF efforts. Some of our Sudanese contacts in Cairo either refused to attend the forum or were not invited. Osama Hassan's Democratic Popular Front (DPF), which represents Darfuri Arabs and the Justice and Equality Movement's (JEM) Cairo Office Director, Mohamed Sharaf, refused to attend the session. Sudanese businessmen, Kamal Ahmed and Mohamed Abdel Moneim, told us they received invitations, but would not attend. Kamal Ali, the NDP's Cairo office chief told us that his representative did not participate on the final day because the forum turned "anti-government." Nawar told us that the NDF did not invite any businessmen, but would include civil society leaders in an upcoming session.

NDF Sees GOE Support for Bashir as Danger to Egypt

14. (C) Harb told us that the NDF welcomed the ICC arrest warrant because the party supports justice, freedom, and peace in the region. He opined that GOE support for Bashir "endangers" Egyptian lives because this one-sided approach threatens Egypt's access to the Nile, its "source of life." Harb stated that support for Bashir, simply because he is an "Arab leader," only repeats the mistake of supporting Saddam Hussein. Nawar said that the NDF's position is more balanced because it supports the ICC process for both Bashir and the Israeli leaders. Both Harb and Nawar feel that the NDF has an obligation to launch an initiative to unify the Sudanese opposition parties because of Sudan's "strategic importance" to Egypt, and the need to create an alternative to President Bashir.

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Results of the NDF Forum

15. (C) Harb told us that the NDF invited all the important Sudanese political groups to its forum. The SPLM, SLA factions, NCP and Umma Party sent representatives to a roundtable discussion of the issues on March 24-26. Harb said that most of the participants held "very close views" with the exception of the NCP. Nawar stated that the discussions resulted in an agreement that addresses humanitarian aid, security in the IDP camps, return of IDPs, principles for peace, and a transition to democracy. According to Nawar, the Sudanese groups, with the exception of the NDP, agreed that the international NGOs should be readmitted into Sudan because they provide 65 percent of the humanitarian aid in Darfur. The non-NDP participants in the forum agreed that the "Arab and Islamic" countries could not adequately fill the gap left by the international NGOs. Nawar mentioned that corruption was a problem. He said that 90 percent of aid recently provided by the Arab Union of Physicians went to Bashir allies in Darfur, and not to those who needed it.

16. (C) Nawar said that the participants agreed that it was UNAMID's responsibility to provide security in the IDP camps. However, all agreed that UNAMID forces did not have proper equipment and were unsure of their mandate. The non-NDP parties said that the Government of Sudan (GOS) restricts UNAMID troop movements, and denies the troops the legal authority to execute their tasks. All participants agreed that the IDPs should be allowed to return to their homes in "peace and security." The non-NDP parties accused the GOS of bringing in people from outside Darfur to repopulate the area and "steal" the houses of the IDPs.

17. (C) All parties committed to honoring the treaties already in place including the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). The participants agreed to a peace process in Darfur that includes trials to bring criminals to justice, return of IDPs and refugees to their

homes, and compensation to victims. However, the non-NDP parties expressed concern that the Bashir government will "mess around" with any and all agreements to delay implementation of agreement principles. The participants agreed to be ready for general elections in all regions of Sudan. Most of the participants advocated for political and economic "wealth sharing." All the parties, excluding the NDP, talked about a proposal for presidential succession. They agreed on a 60-day transitional period, during which the NDP would choose a new candidate for a presidential election.

According to Nawar, this candidate cannot include any of the 51 NDP officials accused of crimes. This process would allow for the peaceful transition of the presidency and remove the "sovereignty argument" against the ICC arrest warrant.

18. (C) Both Harb and Nawar are satisfied with the "comprehensive results" of the forum. Nawar said this was the first time, since 1995, that these Sudanese political parties had sat together to discuss the issues.

Little Reaction from the GOE or Egyptian Media

19. (C) Both Harb and Nawar had mixed feeling that there was not much Egyptian reaction to their forum. Harb told us that the NDF did not receive any objections from the GOE on the forum. He said that SSIS inquired about the event, and was only concerned that the Sudanese community in Egypt did not become agitated and cause trouble. Harb is unsure whether the lack of reaction is a good or bad sign, but he felt that the lack of "interference" in the forum was good sign.

110. (C) Harb was frustrated by the lack of Egyptian media coverage. The forum was covered in a few, small, independent newspapers, but not in the major dailies. He opined that scandal and Palestinian issues were the only topics that interest the Egyptian public. He said that the Palestinian issue is important, but "it gets more attention than it deserves" because "the Egyptian press makes it an emotional issue," while Sudan coverage is primarily fact-based. However, he said that GOE officials realize that the Sudan issue may be more important to Egypt's national security.

NDF Not Pleased With U.S. Role in Sudan

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111. (C) Harb said he is "frustrated" with the U.S. position on Sudan because the USG does not insist that Bashir be taken to trial in The Hague. He opined that U.S. policy in Sudan puts peace, justice, and democracy ahead of humanitarian concerns in Darfur, and he believes that the USG should reprioritize its policies.
SCOBAY